

STARTING POINTS

When George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant laid out President's Park in 1791, they envisioned it as the setting for the White House and the centerpiece of the new capital. Covering 82 acres from H Street to Constitution Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets, it was the first parcel acquired for the federal city, and is still listed as "Reservation Number 1" in the land records of the District of Columbia. In addition to the White House, the park includes the Old Executive Office Building, Lafayette Park, the Treasury Building, the Ellipse and numerous smaller parks, monuments and memorials.

Preserving this priceless cultural and symbolic landscape, within the context of a modern city and a modern presidency, is the broad goal of the *Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park*.

As the first comprehensive plan, it replaces the piecemeal and reactive approach of the past with a coherent and integrated strategy for the future. No more quick fixes that turn out to be more costly and cumbersome than permanent ones.

The plan recommends that President's Park once again be a pedestrian precinct where visitors won't have to dodge cars and delivery trucks in order to reach the grounds. Whenever possible, new structures will be placed underground so as not to disturb the historic landscape.

The White House is also a priceless educational resource that should be accessible and inspiring to all. This goal can be achieved with better exhibits and public programs, located in a new visitor center that provides not only a ticket and a brochure, but also a compelling introduction to the White House and its place in American history.

Finally, the White House and President's Park are part of Washington, precious open space in the middle of a dense urban environment. They offer dramatic views of the Capitol, the Potomac River and the magnificent distances beyond. These views have inspired American presidents for 200 years, and they must be preserved as reminders of the White House's relationship to the other branches of government, to the city around it and to the nation as a whole.